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Over the past weeks and months, the ability of American intelligence to protect life and limb against terrorism and, indeed, to help protect the security of the nation itself against our adversaries has been gravely weakened by revelations of sensitive intelligence collection techniques and information. Virtually every method we have of acquiring intelligence -- our human agents, our relationships with other intelligence services, our photographic, electronic, and communications tracking capabilities -- has been damaged as disclosures of sensitive information have enabled our enemies to defeat our capabilities. Concern in the Executive Branch and the Congress -- and I believe among the public at large -- has become deep and widespread. We cannot permit this progressive neutralization of America's first line of defense to continue.

Regrettably, some treat our expressions of concern and determination to halt the damage as a threat to a free press. This is not only untrue but misses the point. It is one thing to expose waste, inefficiency, mismanagement, corruption, and other misconduct -- an effort we must

encourage and where we should applaud the diligence and ingenuity of the press. Similarly, however discomfoting it may be, coverage of differences within the Executive Branch and between the Executive Branch and the Congress are certainly legitimate subjects for the attention of the media. But, the wanton and willful disclosure of intelligence capabilities by those inside government who violate their trust as well as the publication of information about those sources must be stopped.

Granted, the government has a responsibility to use the classification system more judiciously and to enforce discipline within its own ranks more vigorously. At the same time, however, it is imperative that the media recognize it too has responsibilities concerning the security of our country as well. The continued security and freedom of the nation is essential to the existence of a strong, free press. It is essential that the media recognize the difference between the very serious damage done to our security through the publication of information revealing sensitive intelligence capabilities and the legitimate need to report critically on government and for the American public to possess as much information as possible to make informed judgments about the conduct of the government's business. The truth is that our most costly and important intelligence assets have been compromised not to expose wrong doing, fraud or mismanagement but simply because they represent sensational information. Extraordinary intelligence collection techniques have been divulged for nothing more than cheap titilation.

The government and the media have separate but equally important responsibilities. The protection of genuinely sensitive intelligence sources and methods is a challenge that we must deal with together. It is time for a rational discussion of these responsibilities. An agenda for dialogue would have at least four components:

- (1) Enforcement within the Executive Branch of more stringent controls on the classification of information. There is no question but that there is abuse: too many documents are classified and too many are over classified. As long as there are abuses in this arena it is difficult to get anyone, in or out of government, to take seriously that information which genuinely affects our national security and must be protected.
- (2) Establishing greater discipline in the handling and protection of sensitive information within the government. The most effective way of curtailing damage is to increase discipline within the government. The inability to control sensitive information is destructive to the morale of people who do keep secrets, as well as damaging to our security. During the last several years, the President has emphasized the special obligation federal workers have to protect the classified information with which they are entrusted. We have increased our efforts to uncover those who violate this trust.

- (3) Improved cooperation between the media and the government in avoiding damage from disclosure of classified information. Katharine Graham recently called for "... full cooperation wherever possible between the media and the authorities. When the media obtains especially sensitive information, we are willing to tell the authorities what we have learned and what we plan to report. And while reserving the right to make the final decision ourselves, we are anxious to listen to arguments about why information should not be aired. [The media] want to do nothing that would endanger human life or national security. We are willing to cooperate with the authorities in withholding information that could have those consequences." We have been gratified by the readiness of some reporters and editors to carefully consider sometimes withholding publication of information which could jeopardize national interests or to treat or present a story in a manner which meets the public need, yet minimizes potential damage and to consult on how it might be minimized. We are always ready and available on short notice to help on that.
- (4) Deter the unauthorized disclosure of classified information by establishing and enforcing appropriate penalties. Congress, shortly after it established the National Security Agency to gather signals intelligence, in 1950 enacted a law which prohibits the publication of information about communications

intelligence. There has been widespread violation of that law over recent weeks and months. Much damage has been done. During World War II, allied ability to read German and Japanese communications shortened the war and saved an incalculable number of lives. A single media story could have taken that advantage away from us overnight.

In 1950, Congress recognized this by enacting restrictions against publishing information about communications intelligence. The House Judiciary Committee carefully limited the application of this prohibition to information about communications intelligence which it terms: "a small degree of classified matter, a category which is both vital and vulnerable to almost a unique degree."

The growing will and ability of our friends and allies to counter terrorism and our own ability to protect our citizens depends very heavily on this particular intelligence capability. It would be very difficult indeed to justify failure to use a law enacted by the Congress for that specific purpose to deter further damage to a capability so critical at this point in history.

The question legitimately has been asked why we have raised this 1950 statute after so long a period of disuse. The honest

answer is that the avalanche of compromises in recent months, including some of the most sensitive collection techniques available to the American government, has finally prompted us to turn to all possible legal remedies to try to staunch the damage by dismissal and prosecution of leakers and use of all available statutory authorities. We were aware of the potential for misunderstanding and of the sensitivity of the media to the issues these measures raise. But the legal authority is there, and for good reason, and it is imperative that the Executive Branch use it.

I believe we that we're all working toward the same goal -- maintaining the best and most free country in the world. We in government fully support and admire the commitment of the press to inform the public and the dedication and ingenuity with which this commitment is carried out. But I do believe we all have responsibilities we must balance. Admittedly, it is a very delicate and difficult balance to strike, but we need help from the press in protecting the nation's legitimate intelligence secrets. Past experience has shown that we can work together without violating the rights of a free press. It is time to move beyond shrill accusations and the attribution of base motives and to begin a genuine exchange between the media and the government on this subject. We are eager to develop better understanding and closer cooperation in an effort to ensure that even while protecting a free press, the nation's intelligence services can carry out their responsibility to protect the country.